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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000409

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON AND AF/SPG, AF/C  
NSC FOR HUDSON AND PITTMAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU  
PARIS FOR KANEDA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)

SUBJECT: SUDANESE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR WARNED ON SUPPORTING  
CHADIAN REBELS

REF: A. KHARTOUM 397

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 385

Classified By: Charge D'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Warned about continued interference in  
Chad on March 17, Sudanese Presidential Advisor Mustafa Osman  
Ismail said that Sudan was ready for immediate monitoring of  
its border with Chad, denied that Sudan supports Chadian  
rebels and said that the U.S. should press President Deby to  
halt his own intervention in Darfur. CDA Fernandez countered  
that the U.S. knows that Sudan is supporting the rebels and  
warned that if Deby falls and chaos results, the West  
inevitably will hold Sudan directly responsible. End summary.

The West Will Blame Sudan

[1](#)2. (C) On March 17, CDA Fernandez met with Sudanese  
Presidential Advisor Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail and bluntly  
urged that Sudan desist from providing support to Chadian  
rebels that are seeking to overthrow the government of  
Chadian President Idriss Deby. The CDA warned that there are  
clear indications of new attempts to overthrow President Deby  
in the next few weeks. The result could be the outbreak of  
conflict among the competing rebel groups. Were this to  
happen, the West would blame Sudan. While the United States  
understands that both Chad and Sudan are interfering in each  
others affairs, Deby's fall would be disastrous leading to  
civil conflict and a resulting humanitarian crisis. CDA told  
Dr. Mustafa "we don't think you are supporting the Chadian  
rebels, we know you are" and such support risks jeopardizing  
a potential US-Sudan dialogue before it even gets started.

We, re Not Supporting Rebels, But If We Were ...

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Osman denied that Khartoum is supporting the  
Chadian rebels. He agreed that Deby, who he noted had come  
to power with Sudan's help and described as a devout Muslim,  
is the best option available for Chad right now. Sudan,s  
problem with Deby, Osman continued, is the cross-border  
intervention in Darfur by Deby,s allies in the JEM rebel  
movement. Osman recommended that the U.S. instead advise  
Deby to have his proxies stay out of Darfur.

[1](#)4. (C) Osman contended that if Sudan were supporting the  
rebels in Chad, it would provide them with antiaircraft  
weapons to combat government helicopters. Sudan has no  
interest in removing Deby from power. CDA countered that the  
U.S. knows that Sudan is providing support to the rebels in

Chad, "and half of Sudan knows this too". Rebels have been re-equipped in Sudan and already have moved across the border into Chad. Osman countered that in Dakar, Deby had charged that on the same day that the bilateral agreement was signed, rebels crossed the border into Chad from Sudan. Osman noted EUFOR had denied Deby's charges. Should the U.S. believe Deby or should the U.S. believe EUFOR, he asked rhetorically.

He noted that US intelligence has been wrong before in such cases, in Sudan and in the region, mentioned the Khartoum pharmaceutical plant attacked by cruise missiles in 1998. Osman continued that what is needed on the border are monitors from the EU and AU, not just from Chad and Sudan. "Tell Washington that we are ready for the border to be monitored immediately," he implored, "is Deby ready for that?"

#### All Things Are Not Equal

15. (C) CDA Fernandez agreed on the immediate need to monitor the Chad-Sudan border. He said that both sides have signed the Dakar agreement and that the U.S. knows that both sides are breaking that agreement. The U.S. is pressuring Deby as well to hold up his end of the bargain. But the situations are not the same. While the JEM wants to overthrow the government in Khartoum, in reality it only is capable of causing trouble in Darfur. On the other hand, Deby is much weaker than is President Bashir. There is a possibility that Deby could fall, and if that happens, the CDA repeated, the West will hold Sudan responsible. CDA added that while monitoring the border was essential, Chadian rebels had already been resupplied by Khartoum and moved across the border.

16. (C) Osman once more denied that Sudan is assisting the

KHARTOUM 00000409 002 OF 002

Chadian rebels and contende6QKhartoum stands willing to permit an international force to monitor the order. Deby's problems are the result of his own violence and corruption, not anything Sudan is doing. If Deby is too weak to survive, Sudan should not be held responsible. "If President Al-Bashir held on to power because of Chadian or Egyptian mercenaries, we would ask him to leave. Deby is so weak that he holds on to power solely through Sudanese Zaghawa rebel commanders," he claimed. The CDA responded that while we may not disagree about Deby, the results of his overthrow would have a tremendously negative effect on our dialogue and relationship.

#### Comment

17. (C) We will continue to demarche the Sudanese regarding their ill-advised support to Chadian rebels. We have made the point forcefully that if Sudan further destabilizes Chad, the chances of any improvement in US-Sudan relations are greatly diminished even if there is progress on UNAMID deployment and CPA implementation. In addition to pressing the Sudanese regime, more can perhaps be done with the Chadian opposition present in Sudan. Given Chadian rebel leader Timane Erdimi's continued presence in Khartoum, we can weigh in with him as well on US opposition to further rebel incursions into Chad, advise him to negotiate with President Deby, and let him know we will hold him accountable for the actions of his soldiers. In any case, the Sudanese have now been warned on Chad repeatedly over the past two months. If they go forward with this misadventure and there are consequences, they have no one to blame but themselves. End comment.  
FERNANDEZ